

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
NEWPORT, RI

OPERATIONAL ART AND THE SILENT WARRIOR: SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
IN MOOTW

BY

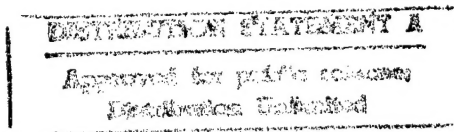
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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

13 June 1997



Paper directed by
Captain George W. Jackson
Chairman, Joint Military Operations Department

19970520 267

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
2. Security Classification Authority:			
3. Declassification/Downgrading Schedule:			
4. Distribution/Availability of Report: DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.			
5. Name of Performing Organization: JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
6. Office Symbol: C		7. Address: NAVAL WAR COLLEGE 686 CUSHING ROAD NEWPORT, RI 02841-1207	
8. Title (Include Security Classification): OPERATIONAL ART AND THE SILENT WARRIOR: SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN MOOTW (Unclassified)			
9. Personal Authors: Mark Ashley Singleton, Major, United States Marine Corps			
10. Type of Report: FINAL		11. Date of Report: 7 February 1997	
12. Page Count: 21			
13. Supplementary Notation: A paper submitted to the Faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.			
14. Ten key words that relate to your paper: Special Operations Forces, Hostage Rescue, MOOTW, Psychological Operations, Humanitarian Assistance,			
15. Abstract: Special Operations Forces provide the operational commander with the flexibility to respond to a multitude of contingencies across the spectrum of armed conflict. The operational CinC must also ensure that his subordinate staff is attuned to the benefits of integrating SOF with conventional forces. He and his staff must also never forget that the level of training of SOF personnel is superior, and that SOF is a formidable force multiplier particularly in the areas of ---Direct Action, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs.			
16. Distribution / Availability of Abstract:	Unclassified X	Same As Rpt	DTIC Users
17. Abstract Security Classification: UNCLASSIFIED			
18. Name of Responsible Individual: CHAIRMAN, JOINT MILITARY OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			
19. Telephone: 841-6461		20. Office Symbol: C	

Abstract of

OPERATIONAL ART AND THE SILENT WARRIOR:
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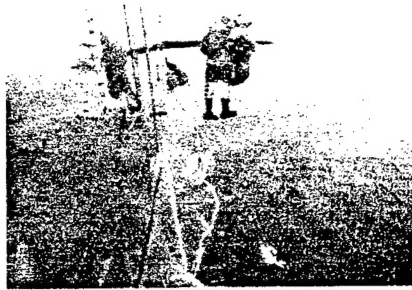
Commanders must become aware of the capabilities and limitations of Special Operations Forces (SOF), and clearly recognize when and where to implement them into the Operational Scheme of Maneuver. The operational CinC must ensure that his subordinate staff is attuned to the benefits of integrating SOF with conventional forces. He and his staff must also never forget that the level of training of SOF personnel is superior, and that SOF is a formidable force multiplier particularly in the areas of --- Direct Action, Psychological Operations, and Civil Affairs.

Special Operations Forces provide the operational commander with the flexibility to respond to a multitude of contingencies across the spectrum of armed conflict. Specifically in MOOTW, the key to attaining operational success when employing SOF is proper integration—choosing the proper force structure to perform the critical task at hand. Proper integration also implies a requirement, to work hand in hand with conventional forces. In doing so, a healthy rapport is developed between both types of forces that significantly enhances an operational CinC's chances for attaining a successful military endstate.

This paper will highlight the diversity of Special Operations Forces available to the operational commander by analyzing two specific SOF case studies in MOOTW. Both case studies will be analyzed and contrasted with the application of the principles for joint operations other than war, concluding with a discussion of the future role of SOF.

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OPERATIONAL ART AND THE SILENT WARRIOR
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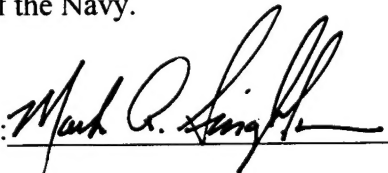
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INTRODUCTION

Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), as defined by Joint Pub 3-0 Doctrine for Joint Operations, is an all encompassing term which delineates a vast assortment of functions whereby the **military instrument of national power is used for purposes other than the large-scale combat operations usually associated with war.**

In operations other than war, the Operational Commander-In-Chief (CINC) or Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander is presented with unique challenges, not commonly associated with the intricacies of traditional combat operations. These challenges range from the complexity in the development of the rules of engagement (ROE) to the criticality of converting national security objectives to military objectives.

Operations other than war demand that the CINC employ Special Operations Forces in order to achieve a desired political endstate. Special Operations Forces are mature, first rate, superbly equipped, intensely trained, professionals who bring with them a regional focus to the MOOTW environment. It is incumbent upon the operational CinC to appreciate fully and understand the vast potential such forces bring to the operational playing field.

When properly integrated into the MOOTW Operational Scheme of Maneuver, Special Operations Forces significantly enhance an operational CinC's chances for attaining political as well as military success. This paper elucidates the diversity of Special Operations Forces available to the operational commander by analyzing two specific SOF case studies in MOOTW; one a dismal failure, the other a resounding success. The transitional period between both case studies will be briefly touched upon,

in order to delineate the improvement that occurred in SOF structure, organization, and operational effectiveness. Both case studies will then be analyzed and contrasted with the application of the principles for joint operations other than war, concluding with a discussion of the future role of SOF.

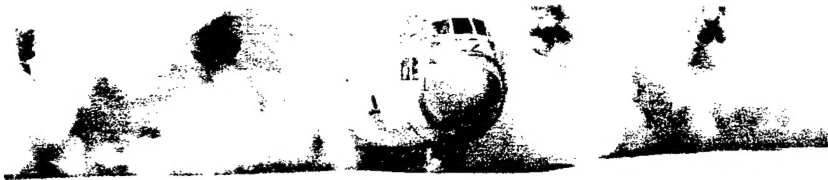
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The legend of America's Special Operations Forces (SOF) has transcended time as well as the spectrum of armed conflict. As early as the French and Indian Wars, American colonists, fighting alongside Iroquois Indians, recognized the effectiveness of unconventional forces and unorthodox methods of combat.

Two centuries later, as Americans monitored the precipitous failure of U. S. efforts in the jungles of Southeast Asia on the evening news, service-wide SOF efforts continued to be highly effective. Yet, the conventional military wisdom of the day failed to exploit the successes gained by such forces. By war's end, there was a complete demoralization of the American military, which brought with it a distaste for anything analogous to special operations.¹

An emerging new trend of political violence drastically changed this line of thinking. By the end of the 1970s, with widespread international terrorism on the rise, it was evident that the United States required a dedicated Counterterrorist Force. Colonel Charlie Beckwith, a highly decorated Special Forces Officer, was chosen to establish an American counterterrorist unit, called Project DELTA. The resurgence of SOF had begun.

¹ Philip D. Chinnery, Air Commando: Fifty Years of the USAF Air Commando and Special Operations Forces, 1944-1994 (New York: St Martin's Paperback 1994), 270.



OPERATION EAGLE CLAW: FIASCO IN THE IRANIAN DESERT

On 4 November 1979, a group of militant Iranian students and a revolutionary faction known as the Pasdaran Revolutionary militia seized the American Embassy in Iran. Fifty-three Americans were taken hostage. Within two days, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski formally instructed Defense Secretary Harold Brown to develop a rescue plan--Operation Eagle Claw.

The most difficult aspects of Operation Eagle Claw would be the infiltration and exfiltration of the rescue force. It would require the use of both fixed and rotary-wing aircraft. Fixed wing assets would launch from bases in Oman and Egypt, while rotary-wing aircraft, Navy RH-53Ds, piloted by U.S. Marines, would fly from the USS NIMITZ afloat in the Indian Ocean. More importantly, the entire operation would be conducted during the hours of darkness.² On the night of 24 April 1980, after covertly penetrating Iranian airspace, and adeptly arriving at a secretive airfield in the middle of the Dasht-e-Kavir desert (code named "Desert One"), located 250 nautical miles south of Tehran, the

² Joel Nader with J. R. Wright, Special Men and Special Missions: Inside American Special Operations Forces 1945 to the Present (London: Greenhill, 1994), 152.

rescue mission was aborted. This was a command decision based upon Colonel Beckwith's GO/NO GO criteria for mission execution. One of the six helicopters that arrived at Desert One was declared unsafe to fly. Limited to five helicopters, Colonel Beckwith aborted the mission. In the process of downloading equipment, refueling and preparing for exfiltration, an RH-53D helicopter's rotor blades slammed into an Air Force EC-130 (internally loaded with 3,000 gallons of fuel), igniting fuel and ammunition. Five airmen from the EC-130 and three Marine Helicopter crewmen were killed. In the ensuing chaos, the five helicopters, filled with classified documents, and the dead air crewmembers were abandoned. The valorous attempt to rescue the hostages became a fiasco in the desert of south central Iran.

EAGLE CLAW AND THE PRINCIPLES OF MOOTW; A COMPARISON

In assessing Operation Eagle Claw, it is important to compare the principles of MOOTW with the planning involved in the preparation and execution of this mission. The plan itself was complicated, and involved each of the services. Yet there was no joint service planning effort. It relied upon accurate intelligence, synchronization, optimum weather, and a lot of luck.

The first principle in MOOTW is the *objective*. The objective must always be clearly understood, as operational commanders must be able to ascertain what constitutes mission success or mission termination. Colonel Beckwith and his subordinates knew exactly what the objective was-- the recovery of the American hostages. Clearly, Colonel Beckwith's actions at Desert One demonstrated his sound operational leadership and prudence at determining abort criterion or mission termination. In his judgement,

without the sixth helicopter the operation's risk had exceeded any measurable chance of success.

In addition to being clearly understandable, the objective must be obtainable. In this case it was obtainable, but required the cooperation of various governmental and non-governmental agencies. This facet of the operation proved to be the most difficult.

Planning included an intricate network of Special Forces and CIA operatives operating from within the city of Tehran, thus facilitating the accessibility to the hostages. The aircraft disaster at Desert One, however prevented this network from validating its worth. There is little doubt that every man throughout the chain of command knew the objective. Although risky, the operation could have attained phenomenal results.

The next principle in MOOTW is *security*. A major concern in any military operation; security is necessary to prevent hostile factions from acquiring an unexpected advantage. Operation Eagle Claw was no exception. In the very beginning, there was within the White House a prevalent fear that the potential existed for a breach of operational security.

Zbigniew Brzezinski's gravest concern was secrecy and surprise. "His fears were grounded in the pattern of frequent leaks in the government....This excessive preoccupation with secrecy did little more than hamper effective planning."³ Brezezinski was later quoted as saying, "In fact this overriding concern for operational security dictated the approach of using an ad hoc group to plan and execute the mission,

³ James F. Knight, "The 1980 Iran Rescue Mission: Leader's Reflections," Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA: 1991, 6.

rather than using an established standing operational headquarters, such as the United States Readiness Command.”⁴

The Joint Chiefs of Staff possessed a concept plan (CONPLAN) for contingency operations, however only parts of the plan were actually implemented. Oddly enough, the problem in Operation Eagle Claw was security, or rather the overemphasis placed upon it. The overemphasis in security prevented the rescue force from conducting joint mission rehearsals, prior to the execution of the actual rescue attempt. This lack of joint rehearsals jeopardized the overall rescue attempt from its inception.

It should also be noted that the five RH-53D helicopters left behind at Desert One were filled with detailed information regarding the operational plan, much to the chagrin of intelligence operatives working undercover in Tehran. This eliminated the possibility of conducting any similar attempt in the future.

Unity of effort is the next principle to be examined, and infers a combined effort necessary to obtain the objective. During the initial planning stages of Operation Eagle Claw, unity of effort was non-existent. Feelings of mistrust existed between the military and certain members of President Carter’s cabinet, which did not enhance the chances of success.

Compartmentalized, stove-pipe planning within each of the services was commonplace. Ad hoc C2 arrangements and the absence of an established structure left gaping holes in the overall plan. Combined, these factors significantly contributed to the failure of the rescue effort.⁵

⁴ Zbigniew Brezezinski. “The Failed Mission,” The New York Times Magazine, 18 April 1982, p. 29.

⁵ Knight, Leader’s Reflections, 7.

Unity of effort also implies unity of command. During the execution phase of the rescue operation, unity of command was strictly adhered to. Colonel Beckwith served as the ground force commander with the responsibility of developing the ground tactical plan, and had a free hand during the execution phase.

The principle of *restraint*, simply defined, is appropriate force applied wisely. In Operation Eagle Claw, the diligent efforts of Colonel Beckwith and his deputy, Air Force Colonel James Kyle, are indicative of an acquired operational wisdom frequently seen in seasoned planners. When analyzing the organizational structure and numbers within the rescue force, it is evident that Beckwith and Kyle used only what was necessary. This was a force capable of achieving immediate, overwhelming tactical superiority in a limited area for a minimal amount of time, comprised of Special Forces, DELTA, Army Rangers, Air Force combat control teams, and a sundry of support personnel.⁶

Force protection was a major concern. Three AC-130 Spectre gunships flying aerial armed reconnaissance and close air support would provide this. With multiple weapon systems, sophisticated avionics, Forward Looking Infra-red Radar, and television gun cameras, the Spectres could inflict tremendous casualties or conduct precision fires, if necessary, resulting in minimal collateral damage.

The principle of *perseverance* is defined as the preparation for the measured, protracted application of military capability in support of strategic aims. Perseverance is difficult to assess when compared to Operation Eagle Claw, as the aborted rescue

⁶ Chinnery, Air Commando, 272-273.

mission was neither protracted, nor did it influence the militant Iranians in returning the captured American hostages. If anything, it strengthened their resolve in standing against "The Great Satan".

In this operation, planners at both the strategic and operational levels failed to balance their desire to attain the release of the hostages quickly with a more long-term yet more decisive, effort. At first this may seem quite odd, but the unusual circumstances associated with the Iranian crisis, the 10,000 nautical mile distance from the U.S. to Tehran, and the lack of understanding which existed between SOF and conventional forces highlighted the need for a more perseverant effort.

The principle of *legitimacy* focuses on sustaining the willing acceptance by a people of the right of their government to administer, govern, or make, as well as carry out, decisions. Internationally sanctioned standards are paramount. In Eagle Claw, legitimacy was partially achieved. Eagle Claw would have been legitimized virtually world-wide, had it been successful, as many nations loathed Islamic terrorism. However, there was no extensive attempt made to employ psychological operations (PSYOPS) in order to enhance both the domestic and international perceptions of Operation Eagle Claw. This integral facet of special operations was never considered and contributed to the debilitating blow SOF was dealt that night in the desert.

THE STRUGGLE TO RECOVER

Like the legendary Phoenix, SOF would begin its struggle for credibility from the ashes of the burning wreckage in the Iranian Desert. It had help from General Edward C. Meyer, who, as the Army Chief of Staff, proposed the establishment of a Strategic Services Command within the Department of Defense. This would have been a

unified combatant command that would have zeroed in on the difficult tasks of combating terrorism and insurgencies. Many believe this proposal was thwarted as a result of a combined effort by the Air Force and the Navy.⁷

General Meyer then attempted to convince the JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff) of creating a joint organization for special operations, but this effort failed as well.

Fervently convinced, of the need for a more unified SOF command structure, General Meyer, in 1982, established the 1st Special Operations Command (SOCOM). 1st SOCOM was created in order to maximize the effectiveness of special operations, by consolidating all Army SOF organizations.⁸

After the invasion of Grenada and the bombing of the U.S. Marine BLT 1/8 Headquarters in October 1983, congressional interest in SOF revitalization was on the rise. By November 1986, after intense review, Congress passed the Cohen-Nunn Act or SOF Bill, which advocated the creation of a unified command for all special operations forces.⁹ This bill also called for the establishment of a Major Force Program (MFPII) specifically for SOF, and created a coordinating board for low-intensity conflict within the National Security Council. The eventual establishment of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and the assignment of civil affairs (CA) and

⁷Christopher K. Mellon, "The Low Frontier: Congress and Unconventional Warfare", Remarks at the National War College, January 11, 1988.

⁸ Ibid.,

⁹ William G. Boykin, "Special Operations And Low-Intensity Conflict Legislation: Why Was It Passed And Have The Voids Been Filled?," Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA: 1991, 21-59.

PSYOPS under its cognizance as well as the establishment of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) served to enhance SOF efforts and capabilities.¹⁰

THE TURNING POINT

In October 1985, an incident occurred that demonstrated the rapid response capability and the adroitness of American special operations forces. Four Palestinian terrorists seized and commandeered the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* off Port Said, Egypt. After seizing nearly one hundred passengers, the terrorists communicated their demands--the release of fifty Palestinian terrorists held in Israeli jails. The hijackers threatened punitive measures against the hostages, if their demands were not met.

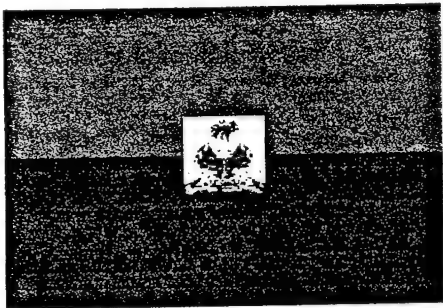
On 8 October 1985, an American, Leon Klinghoffer, confined to a wheelchair as a result of a stroke, was murdered. Klinghoffer, a sixty-nine year old Jewish New Yorker, was shot in the head and thrown with his wheelchair into the Mediterranean Sea. His body later washed ashore along the Syrian coast.

In response, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, a flamboyant, yet astute member of the National Security Council, recommended the employment of SOF. North, knowing the unlimited potential of special operations forces now under JSOC, suggested the capture of the terrorists by DELTA. When the *Achille Lauro* docked in Alexandria, the terrorists boarded an Egyptian 737 commercial airliner in an effort to escape. U.S. Navy Captain James Stark formulated a plan calling for the use of Navy fighters to force the plane to land in Sicily. Innocent lives were a major concern and were to be protected at all costs.

¹⁰ Boykin, 21-59.

DELTA, led by the commander of JSOC, Major General Carl Stiner, seized the terrorists on the ground and planned to extradite them to the United States for trial. However, the Italian government refused to agree to the extradition, and the terrorists remained in Italy where they stood a mockery of a trial.¹¹

What is important to note is that the efforts of General Stiner and DELTA were not in vain. America, once considered an impotent giant by the international community, was now perceived by the world as a force with which to be reckoned. The SOF community persuaded a world audience of its ability to strike anywhere--anytime with telling effect. The efforts of General Stiner, JSOC, and the United States Navy, demonstrated the fact that the efforts of both SOF and conventional forces could be coalesced into a synergistic fighting organization.



HAITI: THE SUCCESS THAT WAS NEEDED

On an early Sunday evening in September 1994, an armada of over sixty C-141 and C-130 transports, filled with paratroopers and a plethora of special operations forces, took to the skies enroute to the tiny Caribbean nation of Haiti. Their mission was to forcibly remove Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras from power; to facilitate, restore and reestablish the legitimate government of exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide; and to

¹¹ Edward M. Flanagan, Battle For Panama: Inside Operation Just Cause (London: Brassey's 1993), 35.

destroy the Forces arme'es d' Haiti (Fad'H). Planning for the mission (Operation Restore Democracy) had been underway for months as American military and political leaders closely scrutinized the deteriorating situation. Repeatedly, the United States and the Organization of American States (OAS), via a myriad of diplomatic and economic means, unsuccessfully tried to resolve the crisis.

On September 18, a U.S. negotiations delegation to Haiti led by former President Jimmy Carter managed to reach a settlement with the Haitian coup leaders to re-establish exiled President Aristide as head of the legitimate government of Haiti, thus averting the invasion. At the time, U.S. paratroopers and SOF were one hour away from executing the largest parachute assault since World War II. Almost immediately, the transition was made from executing an operational war plan (Operation Restore Democracy) to executing a MOOTW (Operation Uphold Democracy). Haitian military leaders vowed to cooperate with American forces to facilitate a peaceful transfer of power within the country. Almost immediately, Special Operations Forces were called into action and quickly established themselves as a formidable force multiplier. This is particularly true from the standpoint of PSYOPS and CA. Operational planners integrated PSYOPS and CA capabilities into the Haiti plan with telling effect.

UPHOLD DEMOCRACY AND THE PRINCIPLES OF MOOTW: A COMPARISON

From the very beginning, the principle of *objective* was undeniably spelled out for the U.S. operational chain of command during both Operation Restore Democracy (forced entry option) and Operation Uphold Democracy (permissive entry option). U.S. objectives in Haiti were: to secure the departure of the Haitian coup leaders, restore the

legitimate government of Haiti, and create a secure and stable environment that would facilitate the Haitian populace to assume responsibility for their country. American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines clearly understood the importance their roles would play in contributing to the success of these objectives. However, this would not be accomplished without difficulty. The question frequently asked by commanders in the field was: "Is the objective obtainable?" This was largely due to the ever increasing confrontations that occurred daily between pro-Aristide factions and Haitian police while in the presence of U.S. troops.

The linchpin of the success in Haiti centered on a people who longed for U.S. involvement in their governmental affairs. The Army's 10th Mountain Division, U.S. Marines, Special Forces, CA, and PSYOPS, personnel immediately set to work by restoring law and order, thereby engendering an overpowering psychological and physical presence in a country that had been notorious for flagrant lawlessness and human rights violations. The unequivocal delineation of the objective from the outset, coupled with a beleaguered people that desperately pleaded for U.S. assistance, led to the successful application of the principle of *objective* in the execution of MOOTW in Haiti.

The principle of *unity of effort* was aptly applied and understood by the operational leadership during Operation Uphold Democracy. The operational commander for Operation Uphold Democracy was Admiral Paul Miller, Commander-in-chief, United States Atlantic Command (CINCUSACOM). Admiral Miller was a man whose temperament and demeanor provided the ideal operational climate for subordinate commanders. He professed centralized mission planning and decentralized mission

execution. He firmly believed in the team concept, as is evident in his operational command structure.

Admiral Miller accurately deduced that given the number of conventional and unconventional forces involved in Haiti, and the varying degrees of mission execution by operational forces, that it would be essential to formulate multiple Joint Task Forces (JTF).¹² This loosely defined command relationship worked well in Haiti, as it gave each JTF Commander flexibility, and fostered a prevalent feeling of mutual cooperation. This in turn enhanced the varying JTFs in achieving assigned operational objectives in a precarious MOOTW environment.

Security: the third principle of MOOTW, did pose some problems for planners in the Haiti operation. Although it was essential to preserve operational security, the over-classification of the planning effort encumbered some aspects of Uphold Democracy. For example, the top secret (TS) security clearance required for access to planning documents, normally not a problem internal to SOF, hindered interoperability efforts with conventional forces.

The principle of **restraint** was paramount to the success of Uphold Democracy. From the very beginning, the U.S. concept specified the use of overwhelming combat power. However, the U.S. hoped that political dialogue would cajole any potential adversary to avoid conflict.

U. S. Forces were ready either to apply decisive force against opposition or to exercise maximum restraint if the mission could be successfully achieved without force. The permissive entry option would test conventional and SOF levels of tolerance. Isolated incidents of later

¹²Robert C. Shaw, "Special Operations Forces Doctrine In Haiti." Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS: 1996, 35-60.

resistance were dealt with swiftly, with minimal U.S. casualties, while always exercising maximum restraint.¹³

Perseverance was, and remains, the most important principle for U.S. forces in Haiti today. Although several aspects of the Haiti mission have been regarded to be successful, others have yet to come to fruition. It will require more time before the tiny nation is able to fully function on its own. The lasting achievements that have occurred in Haiti thus far resulted largely due to the diligent efforts of American Special Operations Forces, who remain in Haiti today. "SOF successfully applied language, cultural, and organizational skills in support of U. S. objectives in Haiti, helping restore governmental functions and the rule of law."¹⁴ The real measure of success in the Haiti operation will not fully be appreciated until the people of Haiti can administer and maintain a stable government on their own. Until then, OAS, UN, and U.S. involvement are essential.

Legitimacy is the final principle to be discussed. The obvious diplomatic means pursued by the United States since 1991 clearly showed the world that American intentions were sincere and justifiable. This is evidenced by U.S. diplomats working closely with the OAS in order to preserve human rights and to restore the legitimate Haitian government. Special Operations Forces continue to play a pivotal role in legitimizing U.S. involvement. This entailed Special Forces teams and CA personnel

¹³ "Special Operations." Lkd. Special Operations Chapter at "Office of the Executive Secretary of the Department of Defense Home Page." <http://www.dtic.dla.mil:80/execsec/adr_96/chapt__22.html> (20 December 1996).

¹⁴ Ibid.,

operating in and among the Haitian villages and townships thus providing a viable U.S. presence.

During the peak of the multinational force phase of the operation, there were approximately 1,350 SOF personnel operating in small teams, based in 30 population centers throughout Haiti. From those centers, SOF visited over 500 towns and villages, where they were essential to establishing a safe and secure environment.¹⁵

“Operation Uphold Democracy remains a classic example of how unique SOF language and cultural skills can be successfully applied in the initial stages of a peacetime military campaign plan.”¹⁶ U.S. involvement in Haiti did achieve the legitimacy necessary to make it a worthy, and successful venture.

SOF AND THE FUTURE

Special Operations Forces are a precious operational commodity and will be required to perform a multitude of tasks in any future crisis involving U.S. forces. Given the current volatile international climate, SOF will be expected to perform three critical functions:

First, their capabilities will expand the range of options available to operational commanders when confronting crises and conflicts in MOOTW. Second, they will act as force multipliers in support of conventional forces engaged in major conflicts, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the U.S. military effort. Finally, they will expand national capabilities to react to situations requiring exceptional sensitivity, including noncombatant missions such as humanitarian assistance, security assistance, and peace operations.¹⁷

However, the most ominous threat with which Special Operations Forces will have to contend is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This is particularly true in the areas of chemical and biological agents, which have now become

¹⁵ Ibid.,

¹⁶ Ibid.,

¹⁷ Ibid.,

the frugal terrorist's weapons of choice. Rogue nations such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, and North Korea, have devoted an extensive effort at research, development, and production of these deadly toxins. For years, North Korea has worked diligently at developing advanced missile delivery systems in an effort to exploit the full potential of the chemical and biological threat.

A declassified CIA report to the Congress estimates that North Korea would require 10-15 years to develop an ICBM capable of delivering a chemical, biological, or nuclear warhead. Joseph Bermudez, Jr., who writes often on Korean military issues, concurred, saying, "North Korea has been producing chemical munitions/warheads for its large caliber artillery [multiple launch rockets and surface-to-surface missiles]" since the late 1970s. A detailed South Korean report makes this same claim, also without substantiation:
"When the Soviets furnished the North with rockets, they also provided high-explosive shell warheads, but North Korea broke away from external constraints and developed chemical projectile warheads for the Frog-5 and Frog-7A." Furthermore, "Chemical and bacteriological missile warhead development is also being pursued in the Scud-B missile [production] program."¹⁸

With outlaw sovereigns earnestly striving to maximize the effectiveness of these weapons of terror, the operational commander and SOF must anticipate and develop contingency plans for countering this threat. They can do this by either deterring, destroying, or defending against these systems.

Psychological Operations can support deterrence by communicating to foreign audiences a U.S. commitment and capability to prevent the proliferation and use of WMD. SOF direct action capabilities contribute to deterrence and destruction options by providing a precision strike capability against weapons, storage facilities, and command and control nodes. SOF special reconnaissance capabilities can contribute to the defense against WMD threats by providing real-time intelligence unavailable from other sources.¹⁹

¹⁸ "North Korean Missile Threat" Lkd. FAS Intelligence Reform Project at "FAS Intelligence Home Page." <<http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/missile/nkorea.htm>> (7 January 1997).

¹⁹ Ibid.,

CONCLUSION

Special Operations Forces provide the operational commander the flexibility to respond to a variety of contingencies across the spectrum of armed conflict. Undoubtedly, MOOTW will prove to be one of the most challenging. In a MOOTW environment, the key to ensuring operational success when employing SOF is proper integration—choosing the proper force structure to perform the critical task at hand. This also implies a requirement even in MOOTW, to work hand in hand with conventional forces. A combined synergistic effort between SOF and conventional forces translates into a successful military endstate. The 1980 fiasco in the Iranian desert engendered a resurgence in the validity of special operations, and highlighted its importance in MOOTW to the operational CinCs. Fourteen years later, a poverty stricken Haitian populace would reap but a sampling of the real benefits derived from this revitalization of SOF. In this era of growing uncertainty, SOF stands adeptly capable today of meeting the unforeseen operational challenges of tomorrow.

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